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Pious Designs. to be pursued; though not always successful.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

ST. THOMAS's,

JANUARY 1. 1759.

For the Benefit of the

CHARITY-SCHOOL

In Gravel-Lane, Southwark.

By SAMUEL BILLINGSLEY.

Published at the Request of the MANAGERS.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WAUGH, at the *Turk's-Head*, in
Lombard-Street. M. DCC. LIX.

[Price Six-pence.]

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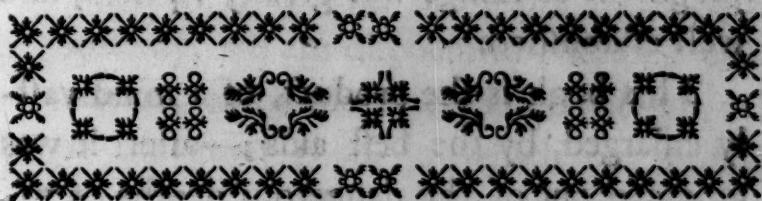
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ECCLES. XI. 6.

*In the morning sow thy seed, and
in the evening withhold not thine
hand : for thou knowest not whe-
ther shall prosper, either this or
that, or whether they both shall
be alike good.*

OLOMON was a prince, great-
ly celebrated for penetration and
discernment in affairs, natural and
civil, moral and divine. His noble thirst
after knowledge and wisdom, were soon dis-
covered : his attention was close. Means
and opportunities of various kinds were im-
proved. His reflections proper, and well
adjusted. By a long course of observation
and wide experience, which curiosity had
prompted him to make, and to improve to
the utmost ;—in his advancing years, his
A 2 judgment

judgment of things was greatly ripened, and well established.

This book is the product, of a mind vastly enlarged by the best aids ;—after it was emerged out of the dangerous depths of vanity and folly, into which his eager inclinations, and the wrong use of wealth and power had carried him. It may then, justly demand our esteem, and a closer consideration than the definitions and maxims, of the other most distinguished and admired sages of former times ; whose names have been embalmed with the highest veneration and applause.

Without the expence and hazard which he incurred, by making the trial ;—we are here taught, what is the sum of the satisfaction, which the pursuits and enjoyments of this world can afford us ; if we allow ourselves ever so great a length in them :—what estimate we are to form of it in its best estate ; and when we are best capable of seeking them out, and having a relish of them :—and especially after we have passed over the most airy, and sanguine time of life, and are come to weigh things with cooler and more mature thoughts :—when sense and passion subside, and our rational powers obtain a freer exercise ; and their dictates bear
a greater

greater sway with us:—and when, consequently, we are disposed to cherish a clearer notion, and a more perfect conviction, what is the chief good, in which our principal views and efforts ought to terminate.

This is very expressly asserted at the close of the book; and very strongly hinted in many other passages and remarks, which occur in it: which I cannot now pretend to point out. They who converse much with the scriptures,—as I hope we all do—will easily excuse me this attempt.

The former part of the chapter before us, down to the close of my text, seems to be an exhortation, to persons who are raised *above* a state of penury, into a capacity of shewing mercy to those who are *in* it; to regard the calls to be useful which are from time to time, made on them.

In the words I have read, there is an obvious allusion to the business of the husbandman. Who is an instrument in the hand of providence, of doing good to the animal creation; by manuring the earth, and putting seeds of divers kinds into it: which “receiving blessing from G O D,” afford an increase “to the sower, and bread to the “eater.”

By

By which figure, it was not unusual with the divine spirit, to represent the duty of men and christians under moral government;—in a social state, and as related to another world. Thus a careless corrupt people were admonished, “to break up their fallow ground, “and not to sow among thorns;—to sow to “themselves in righteousness, and reap in “mercy (*a*).” And in a serious recommendation of the practice of religion, it was said, “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also “reap (*b*):”—“he that soweth wickedness “reapeth the same (*c*);” and he that soweth good seed plentifully, shall reap accordingly. And the minister of Christ is described, as “sowing to the people, spiritual things (*d*);” when he instructs them in the pure doctrine of our Lord.

It is likewise to be observed that, “to every thing there is a season, and a time to “every purpose under the heaven;—a time “to plant, as well as a time to gather that “which is planted (*e*)”—to which a skilful master of the field has a regard; according to the nature of the climate under which he lives, and of the seed which he sows. And thus

(*a*) Jer. iv. 3. Hof. x. 12.

(*b*) Gal. vi. 7.

(*c*) Job iv. 8.

(*d*) 1 Cor. ix. 11.

(*e*) Eccl. iii. 1, 2.

thus “ what our hand findeth to do (*f*),” either for the benefit of our own minds, or in order to promote the interest of others, and the honour of G O D, is to be done “ while “ it is day ;—there is a night approaching “ when none can work (*g*).” Though after all,

The husbandman is not absolutely sure, what produce he shall have, to reward his labour and expence : or which of the seed-times will afford the best harvest ;—the early or the latter. And, in like manner, there may, in some respects, be an uncertainty how far the religious services we perform, may answer our expectations :—how far our charitable assistance to those around us, may fulfil our hopes ;—and whether this or the other instance thereof, may turn to the best account.

This is the general sense, in which I take the expression now under consideration : and, if I mistake not, was the sentiment of the inspired penman.

In prosecution of the subject, I would place these hints in a wider and more distinct view ; by ranging my thoughts under two principal heads :—the one concerning *matter of fact*,—the other a *rule of conduct*.—viz.

I. We

(*f*) Eccl. ix. 10.

(*g*) John ix. 4.

I. We cannot, in all cases, assure ourselves, that what we do in a way of charity, will answer a good purpose :— or that one kind of it will be more useful than another : though there be measures of probability, which should determine the conduct of a wise and good man.

II. That though our prospects be somewhat clouded, it is, notwithstanding, incumbent on us, to contribute our best endeavours, to further the true interest of mankind, and of virtue.

I. We cannot in all cases, be certain that our charitable offices, will answer the end proposed ;—or that one kind of beneficence may on the whole, be more useful than another :—though there be measures of probability in these things, which may well determine the conduct of a wise and thinking man.—*Thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

Under this observation, I would not be understood to intimate, that it is quite uncertain,

certain, whether our well intended acts of charity, will produce *any* valuable *fruits* at all;—either from G O D or from man;—in this world or the next. To say such a thing, would be to contradict the truth; and to give the greatest discouragement, to what I come here to recommend.

But that my meaning may be apprehended, let us consider things as they are likely to stand in the *future* state, and how in the *present*:—or what notice the righteous and merciful G O D will take of what we do in his service, and for the benefit of our fellow creatures; and what effect it commonly has on those, who are made partakers of our kindness.

In the first case, nothing I think, can be more sure, than that we shall find our account in our “labours of love;” when we come into the world of retributions: provided they be animated with pious and friendly principles, and our general temper and character be consistent therewith. For it is an error to suppose, as some seem to do, that this kind of charity will atone for a multitude of enormities; so as to render a person acceptable to G O D at last, though he has not explicitly and fully repented of them.

But we have the greatest reason to believe that the humane beneficent person—other things agreeable—will meet with his reward *in the life to come*. For “G O D does not “forget the services which are, especially “aimed at the honour of his name (*b*).” And Christ our Lord has declared, “the “merciful shall obtain mercy ;—shall be re- “compenced at the resurrection of the just :” (*i*) that he regards the favours shewn to his poor brethren as “done to himself :”—and that they who dealt most liberally, shall be numbered with the saints, who will be admitted to life eternal (*k*). And, hereupon, a direction is given to ministers, by an apostle of our Lord,—to “charge the rich “in this world, to be ready to distribute, and “willing to communicate, on important occasions ; because thereby they will lay up “in store for themselves, a good security against the time to come (*l*) ;”—and Christ advised his disciples, to “make to themselves “friends” of the abundance of earthly treasures of which they are possessed, that “when “they fail,” those offices of the generous soul, may, through the divine favour, introduce

(*b*) Heb. vi. 10.

(*i*) Mat. v. 7. Luke xiv. 14.

(*k*) Mat. xxv. 40, 46.

(*l*)¹ 1 Tim. vi. 17,—19.

introduce them “into everlasting habitations (*m*).”

To which I may add, there are in scripture promises relating to their *present state*; which should be of great weight with us:—though many of them were more peculiarly adapted to the secular dispensation of the Jews, than to what we are under.—“Deal
“thy bread to the hungry;—cover the naked; and hide not thyself from thy own
“flesh:—then shall thy light break forth as
“the morning, and thy health spring forth
“speedily (*n*).” “He that hath pity on the
“poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which
“he hath given will he pay him again (*o*):”
—“G O D will supply all his need; he will
“deliver him in the time of trouble; he shall
“be blessed on the earth, and his seed after
“him (*p*).” The providence which superintends all affairs, and the dispositions of men and the connections and tendencies of things considered; such events may be *commonly* expected: even though we think it requisite to apply such assurances to the beneficent christian, with some degree of caution.

Thus far, then, they who “shew mercy
“with cheerfulness,” have room to hope they
B 2 shall

(*m*) Luke xvi. 9. (*n*) Isai. lvi. 7, 8. (*o*) Prov. xix. 17.
(*p*) Phil. iv. 19. Psal. xli. 1, 2. Psal. xxxvii. 26.

shall not labour in vain. Sooner or later they will be "blessed in their deed."

But if we turn our thoughts to the objects of our charity, and the events of it with respect to those who share therein; we may pronounce those events somewhat doubtful: as it is no wonder they should be; considering what a variety there is in the tempers and inclinations of those whom we oblige;—in their situation—the temptations they meet with—the influence under which they fall;—and many other circumstances, which offer themselves to our minds.

These objects,—to recur to the figure employed in the text—answer to the *soil*, which receives the grain from the hand of the sower. But there is likewise, a variety in the nature and kinds of the *seed* which falls into it. Some being more rich and pure than others. According to which, the harvest to arise from them, we shall imagine, will be of a more or less perfect and useful kind:—after the seed sown has been duely cultivated, and encouraged in the progress of its growth, by the interchanging aids of heavenly dews, and sun-shine, and seasonable weather.

He who is intent on receiving a plenteous and joyful produce from what he puts in
the

the earth; must take care to free the soil from noxious weeds, and other things which might hinder its fertility; to break and mellow it; must suit his seed to it; must watch and defend the tender springing blade; and after it is risen into the ear, and come to maturity, must gather it in its season. But all his skill and industry may be lost, if providence does not favour him. For under the displeasure of it, “a fruitful land is turned into barrenness;” the seed is buried under the clods, or it arises up to a scanty and untimely harvest.

But let us again take things out of the figure; and suppose—what I apprehend none of us will deny—that the blessing and assistance of Almighty G O D, are necessary to secure the success of our most laudable designs, of promoting the virtue and happiness of our neighbours; and that he is always most ready to encourage our honest and pious endeavours.—For it is his delight to do good; and it is his method to do it, by the hand and by the counsel of the benevolent man; whom he hath raised up and furnished with abilities and dispositions to this end.

And yet, after all, we cannot with certainty declare before-hand, that any particular scheme of usefulness, to which we give the

the preference, will fully answer our views in it; or will not, in many instances, fail. Because this will very much depend on the behaviour of those for whose sake it is contrived and carried on. And that is often wide from, sometimes the reverse of, what might have been reasonably expected.

What is imparted for the relief of the urgent demands of animal nature;—for the support of the sick and maimed, the aged and exposed;—answers its purpose, in some measure, by mitigating their distress and fore complaints.

But the influence and improvement, which the best acts of charity make upon the minds of those who partake of it, are not always so great and remarkable, as it is to be wished they were: or as, from the nature and circumstances of the benefit, it might be hoped they would be.

One would imagine, if the reasons of things only were regarded, that they who have been highly obliged, by being rescued from misery, and happily provided for out of mere compassion, by an opulent friend: should behave with decency and respect to that friend; and study to shew themselves grateful every way in their power. And the most destitute and low in the world, may find

find some such ways, one time or other, if they please. But,—I am sorry to mention it—some of those who are most obliged, are backward to give testimony of a thankful spirit. Some have been known to affront and abuse their earthly benefactors. Which is not strange, to one who considers, they affront and rebel against their “Father in heaven” likewise.

So again, it is often known, they who have been put in a way of education, which was kindly designed to fit them to be useful members of civil society, in an honest occupation, or some good capacity of serving others; have not, in the issue, been much more so, than those who have had no such peculiar care taken of them.—I may adventure to aver, there have been instances of some such, who have been more distinguished, by the vilest immorality, destructive of the interests of the community; than those who have been left to grow up in a state of profound ignorance. Moreover,

Even the methods which are taken, by the well-disposed, to promote the cause of religion; do not so generally succeed, as they are in themselves suited to do. The depravity which is obvious in the human mind, the vanities of life, and the tide of
vicious

vicious fashion and custom, prove superior to, and break the commendable designs. They who in early life have been taught the fear of G O D and the folly of sin, and discovered some promising symptoms of a right bias ; when they have come abroad, amidst the gay and the profane, have soon forgot and lost those traces ;—have soon learned to follow the giddy and wicked multitude :—and a few have even exploded and ridiculed the restraints, which had once been laid on them—and exerted the faculties which had been a little widened by good instruction, to give a greater spread and countenance to vice.

However, of the many who have had the benefit of expence and pains of this nature bestowed on them, I fear that experience teaches us, there are not a few on whom all seems to be lost, for the present.

On this footing we may be able to guess at the propriety of the expression, “ cast thy bread on the waters” (ver. 1.)—Deal thy bounty to the people ; though in some respect, it be like flinging seed into the sea, or a torrent, which is never likely to produce it to an increase, but hurries it away to a wide distance.—The poor and miserable being often fluctuating, and not so good as they

they ought to be : forgetting favours received, and not making the advantage of them, which is their duty.

And these thoughts may lead us to reflect on our Saviour's parable of the sower, and his explication of it (*q*) :—which teach us in general, that the means which are used for the improvement of the minds of mankind, are either totally lost on them ; or answer but very imperfectly ; or else, in a few instances, plentifully ; according to their various dispositions, circumstances, connections, and diligence.

Hereupon then, perhaps we have heard it hastily asserted, ‘ it is an unadvised and vain thing, to lavish our time and strength and substance, as many do, in order to serve a stupid and unworthy race of beings ; who are not likely to be bettered by what we do for them :—to reward us, or to be more useful to themselves, or to society, than they would be if quite neglected.’

But this would be premature and inconsiderate judgment.—As well might the laborious plowman, determine to stop his hand, and never more adventure his seed into the ground : because some years, it has been buried and lost, or has afforded

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but a thin. produce to recompence his care and fatigue.

Has not *Solomon* himself guarded against so wrong and froward a conclusion?—in saying, “he that observeth the wind will not sow; he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. (ver. 4.)” Which words have, I apprehend, been rightly interpreted thus,—
 ‘as he that will not sow till the wind blow
 ‘from a favourable quarter, may let the time
 ‘of seed pass over; and he that will not
 ‘reap, because he is afraid of every cloud
 ‘that threatens rain, may lose his harvest:
 ‘—so they that will do no good till the times
 ‘be just as they would have them; or till
 ‘they find objects against whom there lies
 ‘no exception; will never want reasons to
 ‘excuse their duty, and defer it till they
 ‘have no opportunity for it (r).’

All that it becomes us to do, is, to determine and conduct ourselves; according to the remarks we make, and the probabilities of things.

If any particular method of charity, be found upon reiterated trial, generally, to have had bad effects; and seldom good ones sufficient to balance them:—if they who are nourished by, and partake of it, grow insolent,

(r) See Patr. Paraph. in loc.

lent, idle, and intemperate:—behave ill to their benefactors, and dare to insult their GOD:—if this be a common case, and the remedies made use of against it be found ineffectual:—this may be a good reason for dropping such a charity. For we ought to check the occasions of misconduct as much as possible; and to lend no assistance to them.

But there are certainly ways of doing good, which have much fewer inconveniences of this nature attending them:—which often have contrary effects. And a *bare possibility* of their not answering in every instance, can be no excuse for renouncing them all. If in any particular way, it is apparent not only that there is a tendency to promote usefulness; but that every year affords various fresh instances of the benefit procured thereby to society and to religion:—this will justify the merciful man in continuing his friendly aid to it, or rather induce him to do it.

And whereas it is greatly to be deplored, that corruption and wickedness of divers kinds, are growing every day more popular and outrageous:—it must well-become us to stretch out a hand against the spreading

evil; least the vengeance of the Almighty, should come speedily down upon us.

We must, then, allow it to be a very good expedient, to provide for the sober and religious education of children; in order to arm them against the epidemical pollution, and lay them under a better influence. And so diminish the sluices of impiety; which, if there were no such attempt made, would rise apace, and by degrees deluge the nation.

The other thing of which I am to treat, is,

II. That though our prospects be somewhat obscure, or not so agreeable as we desire; it is, notwithstanding, incumbent on us, to contribute our best endeavours to further the true interests of virtue and of mankind. *In the morning sow thy seed; and in the evening withhold not thine hand.*

Famine, and its direful circumstances, must soon ensue, if all the arts and labours of husbandry should be suspended; because events in nature, and the course of providence, are somewhat dubious. This should be rather a spur to industry and watchfulness. And so the possibility of meeting with baffle and disappointment in our charitable designs.

signs, should be a reason for redoubling our efforts, to attain an end of the greatest importance;—in hopes, that if some of them do not answer, others may.

And indeed, this is the footing on which a great part of the business of the world, and which is necessary for the security of the being and comfort of society, is carried on. How many hazards attend the undertakings of the merchant, and the fair trader!—and yet no one will justify an absolute stoppage of their respective employments; under a surmise, they may gain but little by it sometimes. Do they not rather, on this account, apply so much the greater attention and industry, to guard against possible inconveniences and losses? and do not we all agree to pronounce this management very proper.

We are advised in my text, to observe the like.—And we should do it the rather, as there is, in the instance we are now considering, *more depending* on the success we aim at, than on that of a common office in secular life.

“The morning, and the evening” here, may be taken for the whole day, of which they are the principal parts. The day is designed by the Wife Maker of all, to be employed in the several exercises subservient

to the sustenance and good œconomy of the human species. Though under this figure of *a day*, the term of our *life* is often signified. This was our Saviour's thought;—
 “are there not twelve hours in the day?—
 “I must work the work of him that sent
 “me while it is day; the night cometh (*s*).
 “—Walk while ye have the light, least
 “darkness should come upon you (*t*).” To
 which agrees the advice of the apostle—“as
 “we have opportunity, let us do good un-
 “to all (*u*).”

It may not be amiss to take a little notice of this distinction of the day, mentioned by the wise king.

1. *In the morning sow thy seed.* According to the declaration “the sun ariseth, and
 “man goeth forth to his labour,” he is to enter on action as soon as possible, after he comes out on the stage of life, and has attained some faculties for it. The morning then, in this place, may signify, as early as you shall find yourself qualified and enabled to do thus and thus:—as well as the first time occasion calls on you to be so engaged.

It was we know, an appointment to the Jews under the law, to offer the first fruits
 of

(*s*) John ix. 4. chap. xi. 9.

(*t*) John xii. 35.

of their industry, and increase, to GOD. Which was an instruction to them, as it is likewise to us, to devote the *prime* of our life, and strength, and understanding, and of the gains we make in an honest calling, to the service of GOD, and to further the welfare of men.—And thereby to confess his right to our all; and endeavour to obtain his blessing on the residue, and on our following labours.

Before we come to the meridian of life, we find all our powers of action most vigorous and alert;—our capacity of being useful to our neighbours, in matters of religion, and in many other cases, more extended and less liable to interruption in their exercise, than when we are further advanced. And, perhaps I may justly add, we find it an easier matter to part with a little of our earthly substance, when we first come into possession of it, than it may be afterwards:—when too many learn to keep their tenure with a steadiness hardly to be shaken by any arguments of reason;—any sentiments of compassion.

Hereupon then, I might take the liberty of dropping a hint, to the young who are come to years of discretion, and to those who have met with some success in their secular
busi-

business :—that it well becomes them to remember, they are not made for themselves only ;—that they are endowed with advantages, and a measure of this world's goods ; not merely to gratify their animal inclinations, or for the sole benefit of the families to which they belong, or which are springing from them. The welfare of the community, the rules of religion, have a further call upon them—to open their hands and their hearts, to the distresses and wants of multitudes : which, if well considered, plead for their friendly relief, more than the pathetic oratory of language can do. “ *In the morning sow thy seed*”—let the indigent and the ignorant, be profited by thy superior abilities—by the fruits of thy diligence. Begin well ; and thereby throw a favourable aspect over all thy undertakings in the progress of life. Thus seek a consciousness, and a dependence, which will turn much to thy account.

2. *In the evening withhold not thine hand.* That is, cease not to improve returning occasions of being useful, though thou hast been attentive to others before. Hast thou “ dispersed abroad,” and are the effects of what thou hast done likely to be better or worse than thou didst apprehend ;—let that
be

be no reason against a further dispersion. Go on in thy duty ; and hope the best.

It is no unusual thing, for persons who have heretofore discovered the signals of a liberal mind, when they come towards the decline of their days, to narrow their temper, and “ shut up the bowels of their compassion” from their brethren in need. A selfish principle gains the ascendant with them : though they pretend an increase of knowledge, and a higher regard to other obligations, as a ground of the change in their conduct.—‘ In their younger years they did as much as it became them, in behalf of the unhappy. Now they must look at home. They know not to what circumstance they may be reduced themselves. And few pity those who throw away their substance, which they may live to need. There may be days, and years, of darkness and trouble before them ; which they, or their descendants, may not be able to weather through ; without the help of all they have collected together, with much study and continued care and fatigue.’

But the wisdom which was well aware of these possibilities, has told us, we “ have the poor always with us :”—and if so, always intrusted to our care and kindness ;—

and has exhorted us, “not to be weary of
 “well-doing;”—and to “give a portion to
 “seven, and also to eight, even *because* we
 “know not what evil shall be on the earth,
 “and know not the work of GOD who
 “maketh all (*x*);”—whether times of
 “poverty or plenty may be before us;—
 “whether we shall live or die;—what they
 “who succeed us may be;—whether what
 “we have gathered together, may be kept
 “or lost; and particularly how providence
 “can cause an estate to sink and vanish, or
 “to grow and be established, according to
 “the behaviour of the owner.’ For “there
 “is that scattereth, and yet encreaseth; and
 “there is that withholdeth more than is
 “meet, but it tendeth to poverty (*y*).”

Though here indeed, it may be requisite
 to intimate, that the principles of equity
 and prudence ought to guide our charitable
 contributions. ’Tis possible for some to be
 liberal at the expence of their creditors;—
 or to bestow upon strangers and the most
 unworthy, what should be applied to the
 maintenance of their nearest relatives, whom
 it is a crime to neglect;—or to be more
 profuse of their favours, than their own cir-
 cumstances, or those of the causes recom-
 mended

mended to them may permit, or require them to be.

We ought to shew a strict and conscientious regard, to the rules of “ rendering to “ all their due ;” to “ owe no man any “ thing ;”—and to the happiness of those who are linked to us, by the closest ties of consanguinity and chosen friendship ;—and to guide our charity, as well as our other affairs, with discretion ; so as not to endanger our own reputation, or that of religion, by an injudicious and excessive liberality, when our aid is desired for others.

But keeping these things in our eye, we may be persuaded it is with great propriety, we are admonished to beware of a mean sordid temper, when we come towards the period of life :—but rather to “ draw forth our “ soul,” with a warmer generosity, to countenance and carry on public useful designs, and to serve the cause of virtue, which we should espouse. Because then, it may be presumed, our ability to do so may be augmented ;—and it is probable it will soon end, as our days must. We may, with a peculiar emotion say to ourselves, ‘ perhaps this ‘ opportunity which is offered me, of doing ‘ something for G O D and for my fellow- ‘ creatures, may be the last I shall have : I

‘ will then readily embrace it:—for the
 ‘ shadows of death may soon be stretched
 ‘ out over me.’

The institution for the encouragement of
 which we are now met here, may be e-
 steemed a very commendable and impor-
 tant one.

The present State of the School.

‘ **T**HE foundation of the charity-
 ‘ school in *Gravel-lane, Southwark*,
 ‘ was laid more than seventy years ago, by
 ‘ three gentlemen of valuable memory; in
 ‘ order to disconcert a pernicious scheme of a
 ‘ popish free-school, then published; and to
 ‘ provide for the instruction of the children
 ‘ of the poor, in the protestant way. The
 ‘ number first admitted was forty; but by a
 ‘ gradual augmentation, it is now brought to
 ‘ two hundred. The children are taught to
 ‘ read, write, and cypher:—the girls to work
 ‘ at their needle, and knit. They are instruc-
 ‘ ted in the principles of common christiani-
 ‘ ty:—are taught without any expence to
 ‘ their parents; and furnished with bibles,
 ‘ testaments, catechisms, writing and cypher-
 ‘ ing books. This is said to be the first school
 ‘ of the kind, in which protestant dissenters
 ‘ were

' were concerned;—and into which objects
 ' are received without distinction of parties :
 ' —the common good being intended. It
 ' is situated in one of the poorest parts of the
 ' city:—especially for the benefit of the
 ' children of the poorest watermen, fisher-
 ' men, and others. The charges of it have
 ' been defrayed, by the gifts and subscrip-
 ' tions of private persons; with an annual
 ' collection in this place, and at *Westminster*,
 ' together with the remembrances of the
 ' same, in the last wills of some benevo-
 ' lent persons.'

I might take notice that the long standing
 and increase of this school, seem to indicate
 the usefulness of it:—and this renders it
 worthy the countenance of the wealthy and
 the good.—I hope it will remain under
 the guidance and care of an indulgent pro-
 vidence !

Permit me, however, to drop a hint,—as
 it was erected in order to fortify tender
 minds, against the corruptions and shocking
 cruelties of popery ; and to secure their at-
 tachment to the protestant cause :—I should
 think it adviseable to keep that end still in
 view, in the instructions offered to children
 in this school;—by informing them in the

most

most dangerous tenets and practices of the romish church, and the true grounds of our separation from it. And the rather as there is, at this time, too much reason to complain, of the progress that delusion is making among us, though under specious disguises :—especially with the poor, who have not had the advantage of a rational and pious education. Let us look well to the culture and defence of the minds of the young ; least the common enemy sow tares in them.

I would adventure to offer one thing more, to the consideration of the managers of this school ;—we renounce the bigotry of a party spirit ;—and are more concerned to see persons growing up to the love and practice of sobriety and religion ; than to have them follow with us, and attend on our method of public worship on the Lord's-day. But though you do not oblige the children of different parties, to frequent the churches of protestant dissenters as a condition of their having the benefit of the school :—I think care ought to be taken, that they constantly attend on public worship, in some protestant assembly or other, on that day. For there is no great likelihood of their being inured to a becoming sense of sacred things, and a habit

habit of virtue, if they have a full liberty to profane that day; and to be absent from all the public means of religion. As it is, I presume, a just but sad observation we have often made—when persons of mature and higher life, have for a time, withdrawn from them; they have soon grown weary of all other appearances of regard to the Deity: and been prepared to go into all the silly and degrading levities and excesses of the age.—But, though I take this freedom, I flatter myself, these things have been, and will be provided for by you.

And now, Sirs, let me hope that you are all disposed to continue your charitable support of this useful design. Your meeting here on this occasion, assures me that you are. “As GOD hath prospered you” and your righteous pursuits in life, particularly the last year; shew, at the opening of a new one, that you are desirous to “honour him “with your substance;” by putting this rising generation into the paths of wisdom, temperance, and a commendable diligence. Some who a year ago countenanced and contributed to this scheme, are gone into another world, to receive the reward of their piety and beneficence. Others of you, perhaps, find yourselves “going the way of all
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“the earth.” But are you not moved with an inward concern, that after you are gone, a seed should be secured for the service of GOD, and on the side of the best interest of civil society;—amidst the vanity and idleness and enormities of the present times? reach forth a liberal hand to strengthen the good cause:—and the rather as you find, what is collected with this view, applied with so much fidelity, skill, and advantage. And,

“In due season ye will reap, an ample recompence of your bounty, if ye faint not.” Bread which is thus distributed abroad, and to appearance irrecoverably gone, “will be found after many days:”—it may be in the benefit done to others; however in that which shall redound to yourselves. “The liberal soul shall be greatly enriched.”

(z) For this, the Lord shall bless and keep you, when you go out, and when you come in. This shall arm you against evil tidings; and entail a series of favours from him on your descendants. And the other parts of your character and behaviour corresponding with this; you will at last appear before the bar of the great judge with applause, and your happiness will be great in the next life.

life.—“G O D loveth a cheerful giver,” and
 “will reward him openly (*a*).”

“May this G O D, who giveth liberally,
 “and upbraideth not, make all grace abound
 “towards you, that ye always having all
 “sufficiency in all things, may abound unto
 “every good work! and may he that mini-
 “streth seed to the sower, both minister
 “bread for your food, and multiply your
 “seed sown, and increase the fruits of your
 “righteousness more and more (*b*).”

And ye children, who are made to share
 in this benefit of sage instruction, which
 your parents could not obtain for you by
 their own ability:—esteem it a priviledge to
 be thus rescued from the extreams of igno-
 rance, debauchery and misery, into which
 many others, who need this help, are seen to
 plunge. But be advised to be humble; and
 bend your ear to discipline. The stubborn
 and the careless, must not expect long to
 enjoy an advantage they do not improve.
 Be diligent to answer the end of your being
 put under this tuition. Be sensible of the
 gratitude you owe to your earthly friends;
 who have had compassion on you, and are

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(*a*) 2 Cor. ix. 7. Matt. vi. 4. (*b*) 2 Cor. ix. 8—10.

concerned to raise you to a manly and regular method, of providing for your future subsistence; and of being made "wise unto "salvation." Know your duty to your parents; and to one another. But above all, "remember now your creator" who has thus inclined the rich in this life, to consult your welfare for both worlds. May your flexible minds be susceptible of prudent and pious impressions!—that you may hereafter behave with propriety and credit, may well adorn the stations in which you may be placed:—and be numbered with the "children "of light and of the day;" when the children of ignorance and foul wickedness, shall be overwhelmed in darkness, and perish in confusion;—the "GOD who formed them, "shewing them no favour."

Finally, the hasty revolutions of the months, and years, of our short life, should lead us all, to entertain a serious and awakening apprehension, of the harvest which is to ensue at the end of the world. When they that have "plowed iniquity, and sown "vanity," shall meet with an answerable produce;—"they that have sown to the "flesh, shall reap corruption." But they who have "sown to the spirit, in righteousness

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“ness and peace,” and with a bountiful hand;—though they “went forth bearing
 “precious seed,” sometimes with tears and
 much affliction, “shall return with joy,
 “bringing their sheaves with them,” “reap-
 “ing life everlasting;” and “shining forth
 “as the sun, in the kingdom of their Fa-
 “ther.”—May we all act a wise and good
 part, in our several circumstances and
 stations; and then be “found of GOD
 “in peace!”

T H E E N D.

